

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEW, TRANSCRIPT & PAPER

Project Synopsis:

Students should be able to conduct an oral history project, which can address a significant development in U.S. history between 1929 and 2000. Students will be required to submit a typed interview transcript and a 5-7 page typed oral history narrative that describes an interview with someone who lived through – and remembers – one of the episodes covered in this course.

1-Page Project Description _____! (50 points)
Transcript Due: _____! (200 points)
Introduction: _____! (20 points)
Final Paper Draft: _____! (20 points)
Narrative Paper Due: _____! (300 points)

(590 points total)

HOW TO BEGIN

Browse through our textbook from the Great War to the bombing of the terror attacks on September 11, 2001 looking for a subject area of interest to you.

Determine whether you have a family member, friend, neighbor, or teacher who lived through that era who would be willing or able to answer questions from you either in person or via the telephone for an extended period of time (total of 1-2 hours) and at more than one sitting.

Try to stay flexible as you find out whether your potential interview subjects were actively involved in some other well-known event. For example, you might have a relative who served in World War II or attended the famous Civil Rights march on Washington in 1963.

You also might choose to write a profile on a subject that covers several events. Such a paper would resemble the biographies we've read in several articles. This would make sense for someone whose life story is especially compelling and interconnected to the history of modern America.

Once you have found a likely topic, read the sections of our textbook or search online that covers that moment carefully. Consider how the text that we use characterizes and describes the events or period. Refer to any bibliography to read at least three other additional published sources on that topic. Try to put together an initial list of questions that might help determine if the judgments made by the textbook and other authors seem justified in the case of your particular subject's experience.

By _____, submit in a typed, double spaced, 1-page paper 1) the name of your interview subject, 2) a brief history of your topic, and 3) in addition to the interview, how you're going to go about researching your topic.

1-Page Project Description is due _____.

Interview Transcript is due _____.

Introduction is due _____.

Draft of your final paper is due _____.

Oral History Paper is due _____.

ORAL HISTORY? What's that?

- A field of study and a method of gathering, preserving, and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events.
- Both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in the 1940s and now using 21st-century digital technologies.
- Oral histories are only made official once it has been recorded, transcribed, and made available to researchers.

WHY ORAL HISTORY?

- Benefits:
 - o Records human perspectives, insights, and details that cannot be found in books
 - o Provides multiple viewpoints to historical and everyday events
 - o Opens new avenues of inquiry

ARE THERE LIMITATIONS? YES!

- Faulty memories
- Limited resources
- Fabricated personal accounts